



GREATER WASHINGTON PARTNERSHIP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2020

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Region's Leaders Coming Together to Establish Pioneering Capital Region Rail Vision Aimed at Creating a More Unified, Competitive, and Modern Rail Network

Washington, DC— The Greater Washington Partnership has launched the *Capital Region Rail Vision* project with support from EY, VHB, WSP, key stakeholders and leaders from Amtrak, state departments of transportation, and commuter railroads. The Vision will build upon existing plans and explore how the Capital Region can create a world-class commuter rail system within 25 years. The Vision will outline the steps needed to better connect our region, from Baltimore to Richmond, with more frequent and rapid rail service each day of the week, seamlessly spanning state borders, resulting in improved access to jobs, housing, and more equitable and inclusive growth.

Relative to peer regions in the U.S., the Capital Region has superior intercity and commuter rail options. Yet, the current structure of the regional rail network is operationally and physically fragmented among several service providers and owners, straining rider connections, potentially lowering operator revenues and increasing operational inefficiencies. These shortcomings limit our ability to grow the system into a more modern and inclusive rail network.

“Linking communities on both sides of the river will enhance our economic competitiveness by expanding access to opportunity,” **said Matt Kelly, CEO of JBG SMITH and Greater Washington Transportation Committee Member.** “Employers can recruit from a wider share of our region’s workforce, job seekers will have better access to growing employment centers, and employees will have more housing options within commuting distance. The Capital Regional Rail Vision will show us how to get there.”

The Rail Vision is divided into two parts—a high-level Vision Report expected this fall and an in-depth Technical Report expected to be released in early 2021. The Technical Report will detail the path to implement the Regional Rail Vision with the goals of improving equitable geographic economic development potential and increased access to affordable and moderately priced housing.

“For too long, the Potomac River has been a stumbling block to a more cohesive, integrated rail network,” **said Jared Solomon, Maryland State Delegate.** “The Capital Region Rail Vision will help our region’s leaders work together to establish a shared vision. Collectively we want to overcome key barriers to enabling one-ride connections for Maryland residents to Amazon HQ2 jobs at National Landing and vice-

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versa for Virginia residents. We want to better understand what it will take to link up our important defense agencies and related economic activity at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Fort Meade, the Pentagon and Quantico, as well as jobs across the region.”

Recent findings from MWCOG’s Market Assessment for MARC-VRE through-running showed demand for new and expanded rail service with an estimated 17,500 new daily trips by 2040—nearly the same number of current VRE riders today. Additionally, a recent analysis by JBG SMITH found that a more unified, integrated rail network would increase the number of residents within one hour by transit to destinations in National Landing and Alexandria by 765,000, of whom 60 percent would be people of color and 38 percent college-educated. The same analysis found that employees at those destinations would have access to nearly 100,000 additional moderately priced housing units within a one-hour transit commute.

The Capital Region Rail Vision provides us an excellent opportunity to deliver a more competitive regional rail system," **said Jennifer Mitchell, Director of Virginia’s Department of Rail and Public Transportation.** "Through effective regional collaboration, we can fully leverage the plans and investments of our *Transforming Rail in Virginia* initiative and move forward together successfully as a region."

The Rail Vision is being developed with support from the leadership of: Alexandria Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker; former Fairfax County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Sharon Bulova; Maryland Delegate Jared Solomon; Prince George’s County Councilmember Dannielle Glaros; Amazon; Amtrak; Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC); Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET); BWI Business Partnership, Coalition for Smarter Growth; District Department of Transportation; Federal City Council; Greater Baltimore Committee; Greater Washington Board of Trade; JBG SMITH; Johns Hopkins University; Maryland Transit Administration (MTA); Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG); Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce; Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NUTC); Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC); Union Station Redevelopment Corporation; Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation (DRPT); Virginia Railway Express (VRE); and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The Greater Washington Partnership and the project team, comprising experts from EY, VHB, and WSP, kicked off Advisory and Technical Committee meetings in late July and are working with the region’s leaders to release the Capital Region Rail Vision in fall 2020.

About the Greater Washington Partnership

The Greater Washington Partnership is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance of leading employers and entrepreneurs in the region, drawing from the leading employers and entrepreneurs committed to making the Capital Region—from Baltimore to Richmond—one of the world’s best places to live, work and build a business. Working in collaboration with leaders across our communities, the Partnership connects and leverages the region’s extraordinary assets to advance inclusive, actionable solutions that strengthen the Capital Region as a leading global region and center for commerce and innovation.



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